



April 21, 2020: Transit-Oriented Development Open House Q&A

Session 3

Q. How does Rapid Transit (RT) work?

A. RT, commonly known as bus rapid transit (BRT), is designed to provide enhanced transit service. Serving vital corridors of the city, it reduces travel times and promotes a high level of passenger amenities. While BRT operations differ throughout the country, they all have a few common elements which will be incorporated into the Rochester RT system:

- Specially designed stations and buses with unique graphics and names.
- Frequent service. The proposed RT service plans to operate 7-days a week, in as little as every 5 minutes during weekday peak times and 15-20 minutes on the weekends.
- Real-time schedule information displays at stations.
- Level boarding. Stations will be level with doors on the buses, so there are no steps to navigate. Commuters can easily walk or roll right onto the bus.
- Enhanced station lighting.
- Improved pedestrian and bicycle connections to stations.
- Bicycle amenities at stations.

Q. What is the timeline for this project?

A. The current planning process entitled New Rapid Transit for a Growing, Equitable Rochester will be concluded by August 2020. Information from this study will be utilized for a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding application submitted in September of 2020. Assuming Rochester Rapid Transit receives FTA funding by the conclusion of 2022. The transit system may be open for public service in 2025.

Q. Is the small residential area along 3rd Avenue being considered for future development?

A. As part of the New Rapid Transit for A Growing, Equitable Rochester (TOD Station Area Planning Study) parcels along the rapid transit route were identified as Opportunity Sites. Opportunity Sites are locations with both nearer and long-term redevelopment potential. These locations include vacant land, surface parking lots, and older, low-density uses likely to see change in the next 20 years as Downtown Rochester grows. The block of parcels in question was left out of the Opportunity Sites list due to the existence of single-family residential units. Joining these parcels together to create higher density downtown development will be difficult and more unlikely to occur by 2040.

Q. What considerations have been made regarding accessibility for individuals with disabilities, senior citizens, or individuals with extremely low income?

A. The design and features of the rapid transit will be evaluated for accessibility. In support of the Community for Health Initiative the transit system will be as accessible, convenient, and as user-friendly as possible. Here are some features that have been considered in preliminary planning:

- Level entry, which will make it easier for those with wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers to board.
- Wheelchair spaces that allow users to choose to ride in either a forward-facing or rear-facing position.
- Braille information located on the ticket vending machines and Braille “Stop Requested” buttons on the bus.
- Auditory and vibratory signals at pedestrian crossings along the route.

At this stage of the project’s development, the community is requested to identify locations and issues in infrastructure around proposed stations that may not meet the needs of those with disabilities.

Q. What vehicles will be used for the Rapid Transit system?

A. Downtown Rochester Rapid Transit system was recommended in 2019 to be a bus rapid transit system. Bus rapid transit systems utilize buses as their vehicle type but operate similarly to commuter light rail systems. This operation includes having a fixed route where vehicles only stop at a set of defined locations or stations.

Q. What is the anticipated footprint, or size, of a Rapid Transit Station?

A. The size of a rapid transit station can vary based upon several factors, including the number of anticipated riders at each station, surrounding land-uses, and available public right-of-way. The exact size of each station will be determined based upon all of these factors during a detailed engineering phase.

Q. The subway and skyway systems in Rochester are the composition of interconnected public spaces that have different sets of operating hours. When considering the rapid transit station location, please take into account this set of hours of operation.

A. The project team appreciates this comment and will need to conduct further research on how to best connect into these systems with hours of operation in mind.

Q. Will the transit buses be capable of carrying bikes?

A. Yes, it is the intent of the Rochester Rapid Transit system to accommodate the riders' bicycles. The project team intends to conduct a review of bicycle storage systems and make a recommendation closer to when vehicles are purchases.

Q. How will this project impact Broadway? Combined with the Downtown Master Plan, how many bus-only lanes will there be? How will the rapid transit, combined with car traffic, impact walkability along this corridor?

A. In April of 2020, the City of Rochester began the process of completing engineering and environmental work related to the future rapid transit project. As part of this work, a complete traffic impact study, including recommendations on mitigating factors, will be completed.

One of the elements that will ensure rapid transit is a high-amenity service is the frequency in which vehicles will visit stations. During peak rush times, before and after work, a rapid transit vehicle is anticipated to stop at a station every 5 to 10 minutes. In order to achieve this level of service, vehicles will need the advantage of traffic signal priority systems and uncongested travel lanes in the form of dedicated or transit-only lanes.

The system's service requirements will be included in the traffic requirement and will determine if changes are necessary. Potential changes may consist of modifications to the frequencies of the Rapid Transit service or other roadway system changes, such as additional traffic signals.

Q. In scenario two, Broadway remains a barrier for those using the North or southbound transit. Has there been any consideration of something like a pedestrian scramble level below the bridge deck? This setup would allow people to choose with direction and which side of the river they want to travel and stay away from all traffic dangers.

A. This option has not yet been considered. The Project Team will discuss and review this option further.